

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ANTI-THANOM RALLY; POLICE INVOLVED IN KILLING OF ANTI-THANOM ACTIVISTS

REF: (A) BANGKOK 27480 (B) BANGKOK 26822

SUMMARY: STUDENTS DEMONSTRATORS OCCUPY THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY OCTOBER 4. POLICE DIRECTOR GENERAL ADMITS POLICE RESPONSIBLE FOR MURDER OF TWO ANTI-THANOM ACTIVISTS IN ANKHON PATHOM ON SEPTEMBER 24. UNEASINESS BEING EXPRESSED ABOUT POSSIBLE VIOLENCE INITIATED BY EXTREME RIGHT-WINGERS. END SUMMARY

1. STUDENTS AND OTHER ACTIVISTS STAGING AN ANTI-THANOM RALLY AT SANAM LUANG ON OCTOBER 4 MOVED ONTO THE THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ABOUT 8 P M AND SETTLED DOWN FOR AN ALL-NIGHT RALLY. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE INTRUSION, UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS COLSED THAMMASAT INDEFINITELY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN THE PROTEST. NSCT SECRETARY-GENERAL SUTHAM SAENG-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRATHUM DECLARED THAT THE PROTEST RALLY WOULD CON-

TINUE INDEFINITELY. AT ITS HEIGHT ABOUT 6 TO 7,000
PARTICIPATED IN THE RALLY.

2. ABOUT 1,500 THAMMASAT STUDENTS (OUT OF A TOTAL
OF 12,000) HAD BOYCOTTED THEIR MID-YEAR EXAMS
OCTOBER 4 WHEN UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS REFUSED TO POST-
PONE THEM. EXAMINATIONS AT OTHER BANGKOK UNIVERSITIES
SUCH AS CHULALONGKON, RAMKHAMHAENG AND KASETSAT
CONTINUED AS SCHEDULED. THE STUDENT ACTIVISTS RE-
PORTEDLY WILL ASK THE STATE UNIVERSITIES BUREAU TO
CLOSE ALL UNIVERSITIES UNTIL THANOM LEAVES THAILAND.

3. AT A SPECIAL PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT THE POLICE
DEPARTMENT ON OCTOBER 4 POLICE DIRECTOR GENERAL GEN.
SISUK MAHINTHORATHEP ADMITTED THAT A GROUP OF
NAKHON PATHOM POLICEMEN WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
MURDER OF THE TWO POLITICAL ACTIVISTS ON SEPTEMBER 24
(REFTEL B). ACCORDING TO THE POLICE VERSION OF THE
INCIDENT THE TWO ACTIVISTS WERE CONFRONTED BY POLICE-
MEN WHILE PASTING UP ANTI-THANOM POSTERS IN THE EARLY
HOURS OF SEPTEMBER 24. A DISPUTE AROUSE AND THE
NAKHOM PATHOM POLICE BEAT THE ACITVISTS STRANGLED
THEM AND LATER HANGED THEIR BODIES TO A WALL. SISUK
SAID THE POLICEMEN IMPLICATED IN THE KILLINGS WOULD
BE ARRESTED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. COMMENT: GEN. SISUK'S ADMISSION THAT POLICEMEN
WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDER OF THE ACTIVISTS
IN NAKHON PATHOM AND HIS PROMISE TO ARREST THOSE
INVOLVED SHORTLY SHOULD IF CARRIED OUT PROMPTLY LESSEN THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MURDERS AS AN ISSUE IN THE
ANTI-THANOM CAPAIGN.

5. SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
NITHIPHAT CHALICHAN TOLD THE CHARGE RECENTLY
THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONFIDENT THAT THE POLICE COULD
HANDLE DEMONSTRATIONS OF UP TO 20,000 PERSONS.

HOWEVER, SEVERAL MILITARY OFFICERS INDICATED TO
POLOFF ON OCTOBER 4 UNEASINESS THAT VIOLENCE COULD
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OCCUR IN THE INTERIM BETWEEN NOW AND OCTOBER 14 THE
ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER 1973 UPRISING. THEY WERE
CONCERNED IN PARTICULAR ABOUT EXTREME RIGHT-WINGERS
WHO WERE CAPABLE TO TOSSING BOMBS INTO THE MIDST OF
ANTI-THANOM DEMONSTRATORS KILLING SOME. THIS
COULD CAUSE A CONFRONTATION WHICH COULD LEAD TO
FURTHER VIOLENCE.
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